

## LIFE IS GOOD RETURNS AS FAVORITE IN SATURDAY'S SAN FELIPE; HIGHLY MOTIVATED MAKES SEASON DEBUT IN GOTHAM; CANDY MAN ROCKET TOPS TAMPA BAY DERBY

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, March 4, 2021) – Horses on the Road to the Kentucky Derby have turned onto the proverbial backstretch in their Championship Series races for the May 1, \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I). The action continues Saturday with a trio of races from New York, Tampa Bay and Southern California.

In Southern California at Santa Anita, **WinStar Farm** and **CHC INC's** undefeated **Life Is Good** will be favored against six rivals, including graded stakes-winning stablemate **Medina Spirit**, in the \$300,000 San Felipe (GII). Nearly 2,800 miles away at Aqueduct Racetrack in Queens, N.Y., \$125,000 Nyquist Stakes winner **Highly Motivated** will make his seasonal bow as the 8-5 morning line favorite in the \$300,000 Gotham (GIII). Also on tap Saturday is the \$350,000 Tampa Bay Derby (GII) where \$250,000 Sam F. Davis winner **Candy Man Rocket** heads a full field of 12 in the 1 1/16-mile race.

All three races, which award points on a 50-20-10-5 scale, will air on Fox Sports 2 as part of "America's Day at the Races."

With less than two months remaining until the first Saturday in May, **Greatest Honour's** 60 points is at the top of the Road to the Kentucky Derby leaderboard. Aside from 2020's delayed Kentucky Derby, it's taken an average of 26 points to make the 20-horse starting gate.

**BAFFERT DUO OF LIFE IS GOOD, MEDINA SPIRIT TOP COMPETITIVE FIELD IN SAN FELIPE** – **WinStar Farm** and **CHC INC's** undefeated **Life Is Good** and **Zedan Stable's** graded stakes-winning stablemate **Medina Spirit** top a field of six 3-year-olds that were entered in Saturday's \$300,000 San Felipe (GII) – a stop on the Road to the Kentucky Derby Championship Series at Santa Anita. Competitive

The 1 1/16-mile San Felipe is slated as Race 6 with a scheduled post time of 5:30 p.m. (all times Eastern). The San Felipe is one of five stakes events on Santa Anita's 11-race program that is topped by the \$400,000 Santa Anita Handicap (GI) featuring top older horse **Maxfield**.

Life Is Good, trained by Hall of Famer and six-time Kentucky Derby winner **Bob Baffert**, is undefeated through two starts following a front-running victory in his last start, the \$100,000 Sham (GIII). In the one-mile Sham, Life Is Good built a convincing four-length lead at the top of the lane and was nearly reeled in by Medina Spirit. Following the Sham, Medina Spirit returned four weeks later and recorded a neck victory over **Roman Centurian** in the \$100,000 Robert B. Lewis (GIII).

Life Is Good and jockey **Mike Smith** drew the rail in the San Felipe while Medina Spirit and jockey **John Velazquez** will break from post No. 3.

Also entered in the race is **ERJ Racing, Train Wreck AI Racing Stables, Niall Brennan, Tim Fitz and William Strauss'** Los Alamitos Futurity (GII) and 14-length maiden winner **The Great One; Don Alberto Stable and Qatar Racing Limited's** Robert B. Lewis runner-up Roman Centurian; and **Exline-Border Racing, SAF Racing and Richard Hausman's** debut winner **Dream Shake**.

The complete field for Saturday's San Felipe from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): Life Is Good (Smith, Baffert); Dream Shake (Joel Rosario, Peter Eurton); Medina Spirit (Velazquez, Baffert); **None Above the Law** (Flavien Prat, Peter Miller); The Great One (Abel Cedillo, Doug O'Neill); **Govenor's Party** (Mario Gutierrez, Daniel Franko); Roman Centurian (Juan Hernandez, Simon Callaghan).

**SAM F. DAVIS WINNER CANDY MAN ROCKET LEADS FIELD OF 12 ENTERED IN TAMPA BAY DERBY** – One month ago, **Frank Fletcher Racing Operations'** promising 3-year-old colt **Candy Man Rocket** burst onto the Kentucky Derby scene with a one-length victory in the \$250,000 Sam F. Davis. On Saturday, the son of Candy Ride will attempt to continue his path to the first Saturday in May as the likely favorite in the \$350,000 Tampa Bay Derby (GII).

The Tampa Bay Derby, which will award the winner 50 points and a likely starting gate spot for the \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI), is carded as Race 11 at 5:25 p.m. First post is 12:15 p.m.

Trained by **Bill Mott**, Candy Man Rocket debuted in November at Churchill Downs with a lackluster seventh-place effort. Six weeks later, Candy Man Rocket crushed a six-furlong maiden special weight field by 9 1/4 lengths at Gulfstream. In his first start at two-turns in the Sam F. Davis, Candy Man Rocket tracked from just off swift early fractions and was able to overtake the pacesetters in the far turn to prevail by one-length over his stablemate **Nova Rags**, who could be headed to the \$1 million Rebel (GII) on March 13 at Oaklawn.

**Junior Alvarado**, who regularly rides at Gulfstream Park, will make the journey north to Tampa for Saturday's race and the duo will break from post No. 3.

The field also includes **BBN Racing's** Sam F. Davis third-place finisher **Hidden Stash**. Trained by **Vicki Oliver**, Hidden Stash finished swiftly down the center of the track in the Sam F. Davis but was defeated 1 1/4 lengths. Saturday's start will be Hidden Stash's second race following a two-month layoff. **Rafael Bejarano** will fly from his Turfway Park winter base to Tampa Bay Downs for the call and break from post 8.

The complete field from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **My Liberty** (Tomas Mejia, Maria Mejia); **Super Strong** (Antonio Gallardo, Saffie Joseph Jr.); Candy Man Rocket (Junior Alvarado, Mott); **Bocca Boy** (Angel Arroyo, Cheryl Winebaugh); **Awesome Gerry** (Hector Diaz Jr., Joseph); **Moonline Strike** (Daniel Centeno, Joseph); Hidden Stash (Bejarano, Oliver); **Unbridled Honor** (Julien Leparoux, Todd Pletcher); **Helium** (Jose Ferrer, Mark Casse); **Promise Keeper** (Luis Saez, Pletcher); **Sittin On Go** (Roberto Alvarado Jr., Dale Romans).

**HIGHLY MOTIVATED SET FOR 3-YEAR-OLD DEBUT IN GOTHAM** – Klaravich Stable's 4 1/4-length Nyquist Stakes winner **Highly Motivated** is set for his seasonal debut for trainer **Chad Brown** as the 8-5 morning line favorite in Saturday's \$300,000 Gotham (GIII) at Aqueduct.

The one-mile Gotham will go as Race 9 with a post time of 5:07 p.m.

Highly Motivated caught the eye of racing fans when he drew off impressively in the \$125,000 Nyquist Stakes on the undercard of the Breeders' Cup "Future Stars Friday" at Keeneland. Highly Motivated has been preparing for this start at Palm Meadows in South Florida. The colt will be ridden by **Javier Castellano** from post No. 3.

Shipping in from the Southern California is \$200,000 San Vicente (GII) runner-up **Freedom Fighter**. Trained by **Bob Baffert**, the fleet footed Freedom Fighter lead nearly every step of the way in the San Vicente until he gave way in the late stages to stablemate **Concert Tour**. **Manny Franco** has the mount from post 7.

The complete field for the Gotham from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Atlantic Road** (Jorge Vargas Jr., Todd Pletcher, 30-1); **The Reds** (Pablo Morales, John Kimmel, 30-1); Highly Motivated (Castellano, Brown, 8-5); **Wipe the Slate** (Kendrick Carmoche, Doug O'Neill, 6-1); **Crowded Trade** (Eric Cancel, Brown, 9-2); **Capo Kane** (Dylan Davis, Harold Wyner, 5-1); Freedom Fighter (Franco, Baffert, 5-2); **Weyburn** (Trevor McCarthy, Jimmy Jerkens, 20-1).

#### PAST PERFORMANCES

Brinset.com Kentucky Derby Contenders Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/3p728Wp>

Gotham Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/38a0A8t>

San Felipe Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/3uTm96S>

Tampa Bay Derby Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/2MLOLxz>

Kentucky Derby Future Wager Pool 4 Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/3bZWW23>

Kentucky Oaks Future Wager Past Performances  
<https://bit.ly/3qebrEw>

#### UPCOMING ROAD TO THE DERBY RACES

Date	Race	Track	Top 4 Points
March 5	Patton*	Dundalk	20-8-4-2
March 6	Gotham	Aqu	50-20-10-5
March 6	San Felipe	SA	50-20-10-5
March 6	Tampa Bay Derby	Tam	50-20-10-5
March 13	Rebel	OP	50-20-10-5
March 20	Louisiana Derby	FG	100-40-20-10
March 27	Jeff Ruby Steaks	TP	100-40-20-10
March 27	UAE Derby	Meydan	100-40-20-10
March 27	Florida Derby	GP	100-40-20-10
March 27	Fukuryu#	Nakyama	40-16-8-4
April 1	Cardinal Condition*	Chelmsford	30-12-6-3
April 3	Wood Memorial	Aqu	100-40-20-10
April 3	Blue Grass	Kee	100-40-20-10
April 3	Santa Anita Derby	SA	100-40-20-10
April 10	Arkansas Derby	OP	100-40-20-10
April 10	Lexington	Kee	20-8-4-2

# Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby

\* European Road to the Kentucky Derby

Note: The date for the Sunland Derby has not been announced. In previous years it has been run on the third Sunday of March.

#### QUOTABLE

##### Gotham Stakes (GII):

**#3 Highly Motivated:** "All three of his races have been excellent, they have been outstanding efforts. He certainly has kept good company. That's the thing about starting these horses at Saratoga in the summer and at Belmont in the fall, you never know who you'll run into. Looking back, history tells how strong these races are and he was in some pretty strong ones. It looks to be a real solid group of 3-year-olds everywhere, and he's one of them. ... Every work of his has been an improvement. His last couple in particular have been very strong works. We rested him a bit and brought him back slowly. We're ready to get his 3-year-old campaign underway." – **Chad Brown**

**#6 Capo Kane:** "We have rated him before. In his first race, he came from behind and made the lead and then got a little tired and finished second. Lately, he's been on the lead because he has speed, but I think there will be other speed in the Gotham, so we'll let it play out. ... I think the cut back to a one-turn mile is going to help him. In the Withers, I didn't really have the screws all the way tight on him because I had missed five days of training and I couldn't breeze him when I wanted to breeze him. Going into this race, I was able to breeze him when I wanted to and train him as normal." – **Harold Wyner**

**#7 Freedom Fighter:** "He ran a pretty courageous race after some time off to finish second to Concert Tour, who I think is a nice horse. I wanted to keep him one turn for now. I'm not sure what his distance limitations are going to be right now, but I think the Gotham is a good step up going from seven-eighths to a mile. He should be ready for that. ... He's been working well. He's coming into the race in top form. We'll see if he can get the mile. If you look at him, he's built for speed - a sprinter type. But so was (2004 Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner) Smarty Jones. You never know. I'll give the horse a chance to develop on his own. ... I'm not really thinking Derby with him yet. He's going to have to prove himself and then we'll see where he fits in." – **Bob Baffert**

## DERBY DETAIL

**IMPRESSIVE MAIDEN WINNER COLLABORATE JUMPS ON ROAD TO DERBY –** Three Chimneys Farm and e Five Racing's 12 ½-length maiden winner **Collaborate** burst onto the Derby scene Saturday with his eye-catching victory in just his second career start. Trainer **Saffie Joseph Jr.** reported that the colt could be pointed to the Florida Derby (GI) but could also be under consideration for the Wood Memorial (GII) or Blue Grass (GII).

**DEBUT WINNER PREVALENCE RETURNS TO WORK TAB FOLLOWING FEVER –** Godolphin's homebred **Prevalence**, who broke his maiden by 8 ½ lengths at odds of 7-1 on Jan. 23 at Gulfstream Park, returned to the work tab after he was forced to miss last Saturday's Fountain of Youth (GII) due to a fever. The colt breezed a half-mile in :48.40 on Saturday at Palm Meadows Training Center.

**HIGHLAND AVENUE VAULTS TO TOP OF EUROPEAN ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY LEADERBOARD WITH ODDS-ON VICTORY –** Godolphin's **Highland Avenue's** odds-on victory in Wednesday's Road to the Kentucky Derby Condition Stakes at Kempton helped jockey **Hollie Doyle** etch her name in the history books as she became the first British female jockey to record five-consecutive victories on a single program.

Trained by **Charlie Appleby**, the gray Highland Avenue (IRE) broke a step slow from the starting gate but rallied up the inside rail to secure 20 points on the European Road to the Kentucky Derby Leaderboard. Highland Avenue was Doyle's third of five winners. The others were **Della Mare**, **Laos**, **Sir Titan** and **Madrinho**.

There are two races remaining on the European Road to the Kentucky Derby, which extends an invitation to the top point getter to run in the May 1 Kentucky Derby. Friday's Patton Stakes over Dundalk's all weather surface will offer 20 points to the winner while the April 1 Cardinal Condition Stakes will conclude the series with the winner receiving 30 points.

**DOWN THE STRETCH –** Joseph P. Morey Trust's \$100,000 Battaglia Memorial Stakes winner **Hush of a Storm** will target the March 27 \$250,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII), according to trainer **Bill Morey**. ... Trainer **Steve Asmussen** reported that the next major objective for **Jackie's Warrior** will be the Pat Day Mile (GII) on the Kentucky Derby undercard. ... Fountain of Youth pacesetter **Drain the Clock** will target one-turn races following his runner-up effort behind **Greatest Honour**, according to trainer **Saffie Joseph Jr.** ... Risen Star (GII) winner **Mandaloun** returned to the track Saturday to begin his serious preparation for the \$1 million TwinSpires.com Louisiana Derby (GII). The Into Mischief colt worked an easy half-mile in :50 for trainer **Brad Cox**. ... Churchill Downs Spring Meet stall applications are due no later than Friday. For more information, call (502) 636-4490. The Churchill Downs backstretch opens on Tuesday, March 16 and the first day of training is scheduled for Friday, March 19.

## THE RUNDOWN

### Busher Invitational

Saturday, March 6, \$250,000, 3yo, 1M, Aqueduct Racetrack (R6), Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5. 3:29 p.m. ET. TV: Fox Sports 2

# Horse	Jockey	Trainer
1. Miss Brazil	Eric Cancel	Anthony Dutrow
2. Laobanonaprayer**	Kendrick Carmouche	Danny Velazquez
3. Search Results	Javier Castellano	Chad Brown
4. The Grass Is Blue	Manny Franco	Chad Brown
5. Mo Desserts**	Pablo Morales	Jimmy Jerkens
6. Make Mischief	Dylan Davis	Chris Englehart

### Honeybee (GIII)

Saturday, March 6, \$300,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Oaklawn (R9), Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5. 3:29 p.m. ET. TV: Fox Sports 2

# Horse	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1. Tabor Hall	David Cohen	Kenny McPeck	10-1
2. Will's Secret	Jon Court	Dallas Stewart	7-2
3. Willful Woman	Ricardo Santana Jr.	Steve Asmussen	6-1
4. Sun Path	Joe Talamo	Brad Cox	5-2
5. Pauline's Pearl	Francisco Arrieta	Steve Asmussen	8-1
6. Absolute Anna	Ramon Vazquez	Jerry Hollendorfer	15-1
7. Oliviaofthedesert	David Cabrera	Kenny McPeck	7-2
8. Coach	Florent Geroux	Brad Cox	4-1

### Gotham (GIII)

Saturday, March. 6, \$300,000, 3yo, 1M, Aqueduct Racetrack (R9), Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5. 5:07 p.m. ET. TV: Fox Sports 2, TVG

# Horse	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1. Atlantic Road	Jorge Vargas Jr.	Todd Pletcher	30-1
2. The Reds*	Pablo Morales	John Kimmel	30-1
3. Highly Motivated	Javier Castellano	Chad Brown	8-5
4. Wipe the Slate	Kendrick Carmouche	Doug O'Neill	6-1
5. Crowded Trade	Eric Cancel	Chad Brown	9-2
6. Capo Kane	Dylan Davis	Harold Wyner	5-1
7. Freedom Fighter	Manny Franco	Bob Baffert	5-2
8. Weyburn*	Trevor McCarthy	Jimmy Jerkens	20-1

### Tampa Bay Derby (GIII)

Saturday, March 6, \$250,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Tampa Bay Downs (R11), Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5. 5:25 p.m. ET. TV: Fox Sports 2, TVG.

# Horse	Jockey	Trainer
1. My Liberty*	Tomas Mejia	Maria Mejia
2. Super Strong	Antonio Gallardo	Saffie Joseph Jr.
3. Candy Man Rocket	Junior Alvarado	Bill Mott
4. King of Dreams*	Samy Camacho	Juan Carlos Avila
5. Boca Boy*	Angel Arroyo	Cheryl Winebaugh
6. Awesome Gerry	Hector Diaz Jr.	Saffie Joseph Jr.
7. Moonlite Strike	Daniel Centeno	Vicki Oliver
8. Hidden Stash	Rafael Bejarano	Todd Pletcher
9. Unbridled Honor	Julien Leparoux	Mark Casse
10. Helium*	Jose Ferrer	Todd Pletcher
11. Promise Keeper	Luis Saez	Todd Pletcher
12. Sittin On Go	Roberto Alvarado Jr.	Dale Romans

### San Felipe (GII)

Saturday, March 6, \$300,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Santa Anita (R6), Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5. 5:30 p.m. ET. TV: Fox Sports 2, TVG

# Horse	Jockey	Trainer
1. Life Is Good	Mike Smith	Bob Baffert
2. Dream Shake	Joel Rosario	Peter Eurton
3. Medina Spirit	John Velazquez	Bob Baffert
4. None Above the Law*	Flavien Prat	Peter Miller
5. The Great One	Abel Cedillo	Doug O'Neill
6. Govenor's Party	Mario Gutierrez	Daniel Franko
7. Roman Centurian	Juan Hernandez	Simon Callaghan

\* Not Triple Crown nominated

\*\* Not Kentucky Oaks nominated

## ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY TOP 25

#	Horse	Trainer	Points
1.	Greatest Honour	Shug McGaughey III	60
2.	Mandaloun	Brad Cox	52
3.	Essential Quality	Brad Cox	40
4.	Midnight Bourbon	Steve Asmussen	26
5.	Proxy	Mike Stidham	24
6.	Keepmeinmind	Robertino Diodoro	18
7.	Spielberg	Bob Baffert	17
8.	Rombauer	Michael McCarthy	14
9.	<b>Medina Spirit</b>	<b>Bob Baffert</b>	<b>14</b>
10.	<b>Capo Kane</b>	<b>Harold Wyner</b>	<b>12</b>
11.	Papetu	Antonio Sano	11
12.	Hot Rod Charlie	Doug O'Neill	10
13.	Get Her Number	Peter Miller	10
14.	<b>Sittin On Go</b>	<b>Dale Romans</b>	<b>10</b>
15.	Risk Taking	Chad Brown	10
16.	<b>Candy Man Rocket</b>	<b>Bill Mott</b>	<b>10</b>
17.	Caddo River	Brad Cox	10
18.	Brooklyn Strong	Daniel Velazquez	10
19.	<b>Life Is Good</b>	<b>Bob Baffert</b>	<b>10</b>
20.	Hush of a Storm	Bill Morey	10
21.	Tarantino	Rodolphe Brisset	9
22.	Cowan	Steve Asmussen	8
23.	O Besos	Greg Foley	5
24.	Nova Rags	Bill Mott	4
25.	Super Stock	Steve Asmussen	4

Bold: running this weekend

## SCULLY'S DERBY REPORT

### ESSENTIAL QUALITY STYLISHLY RETURNS, GREATEST HONOUR FINDS A WAY TO WIN –

**Essential Quality** appears right on schedule, opening his 3-year-old season with a sharp win in the Southwest (GIII) at Oaklawn Park. The unbeaten 2-year-old champion is a polished product compared to **Greatest Honour**, who snatched victory from the jaws of defeat by delivering a dynamic late rally in the Fountain of Youth (GII) at Gulfstream Park.

Their profiles differ, but both rate major contenders for the 2021 Kentucky Derby.

Three qualifiers were offered last weekend, with the John Battaglia Memorial at Turfway a new addition to the Road to the Kentucky Derby series, and three more are scheduled for this Saturday, including the San Felipe (GII) at Santa Anita.

Five San Felipe contestants – **Life Is Good**, **Dream Shake**, **Medina Spirit**, **Roman Centurian** and **The Greatest Honor** – are listed among the 23 individual betting interests in Pool 4 of the Kentucky Derby Future Wager this weekend.

### Southwest

After opening his racing career with a pair of convincing front-running wins, including the Breeders' Futurity (GI), **Essential Quality** was seriously tested in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI) last fall. The gray Tapit colt had to rally from nearly 10 lengths off the pace to narrowly prevail over runner-up Hot Rod Charlie and third-placer **Keepmeinmind**.

It was far from a visually stunning performance, but the difficult assignment served as a valuable building block.

A **Godolphin** homebred trained by **Brad Cox**, **Essential Quality** returned in excellent condition over a sloppy track Saturday, establishing a wide stalking trip before advancing on his own accord through the final turn. He responded when

asked by **Luis Saez**, surging to a clear lead and cruising to a 4 1/4-length triumph in the 1 1/16-mile Southwest.

**Essential Quality** is a prime candidate to keep moving forward off the comfortable win. He looks built for longer distances and has earned triple-digit Brisnet Speed ratings. And the stalker possesses the tactical speed to make his own trip if necessary.

The 1 1/8-mile Blue Grass (GII) at Keeneland on April 3 is likely next.

### Fountain of Youth

**Greatest Honour** needed four starts to break his maiden, earning his diploma in late December at Gulfstream. The bay Tapit colt jumped straight to stakes competition with a resounding 5 3/4-length victory in Jan. 30 Holy Bull (GIII).

The up-and-coming sophomore became a trendy Kentucky Derby pick, and many trainers would have felt pressure to wait for the Florida Derby after the Holy Bull — two preps has become the standard for serious contenders in this era.

Hall of Famer **Shug McGaughey**, who won the 2013 Kentucky Derby with **Orb**, would have no problem utilizing only two preps if it fit the horse. However, **Greatest Honour** needed more seasoning, and McGaughey made the shrewd decision to run his pupil back in the Fountain of Youth four weeks later.

**Greatest Honour** received the right setup in the Holy Bull, enjoying clear sailing while offering a visually impressive move on the final turn to seize control. Everything went his way, but circumstances were different in the 1 1/16-mile Fountain of Youth.

**Drain the Clock**, the 5-2 second choice, established a clear lead on a moderate pace, completing the opening three-quarters in 1:11.51. After rating well off the pace and taking plenty of kickback, **Greatest Honour** continued to travel inside a rival on the final bend. And surprisingly, he was basically holding his position in eighth through most of the turn.

The even-money favorite had room to advance along the inside, but **Greatest Honour's** immaturity showed as he appeared uncomfortable in traffic. When **Jose Ortiz** guided his mount wide approaching the stretch, the sophomore's stride lengthened significantly.

The **Courtlandt Farms** homebred closed like a freight train over the final sixteenth of a mile, erasing a five-length deficit to win going away. **Greatest Honour** was moving past rivals so quickly that Ortiz eased him under the wire after collaring runner-up **Drain the Clock** late.

**Drain the Clock** has some quality, but his future is probably at one-turn distances. South Florida appears to have little-to-no depth when it comes to Kentucky Derby contenders – it's arguably the weakest region in the country this year. And the final time of the Fountain of Youth was on the slow side.

Legitimate questions still surround **Greatest Honour**, but he has this "it" factor. We haven't seen his best yet, just wait until he stretches out in distance.

The exciting colt will make his final prep in the 1 1/8-mile Florida Derby (GI) on March 27.

## John Battaglia Memorial

**Hush of a Storm** had to survive an inquiry, but the stalker made his stakes debut a winning one in Friday's John Battaglia Memorial at Turfway. The Creative Cause colt unnecessarily lugged in while launching a decisive rally in upper stretch, drawing away to score by 1 ½ lengths, and stewards ruled the incident didn't affect the order of finish.

After dropping his first outing, Hush of Storm has won three straight for trainer **Bill Morey**. He easily broke his maiden over Turfway's Tapeta in mid-December, and captured an entry-level allowance 18 days later.

Hush of a Storm picked up new jockey **Santiago Gonzalez** and stretched out to 1 1/16 miles in the Battaglia, earning 10 points toward a Derby berth. The bay colt will return for the \$250,000 Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII) at Turfway on March 27, which will offer 170 points (100-40-20-10) as a major qualifier.

### Up next

Along with the San Felipe, I will review the Gotham (GIII) at Aqueduct and Tampa Bay Derby (GII) next week. – **James Scully/TwinSpires.com**

## LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS UPDATE

**SUN PATH MADE 5-2 MORNING LINE FAVORITE IN GRADE III HONEYBEE** – **Juddmonte Farms'** two-time winner **Sun Path** was installed as the 5-2 morning line favorite in the field of eight 3-year-old fillies signed on to compete in Saturday's \$300,000 Honeybee (Grade III) at Oaklawn.

The Honeybee is the featured race on Oaklawn's 10-race program. The 1 1/16-mile event is carded as Race 9 with a post time of 6:10 p.m. The Top 4 finishers will be awarded points on a 50-20-10-5 scale for the April 30, \$1.25 million Longines Kentucky Oaks.

Trained by two-time Kentucky Oaks-winning conditioner **Brad Cox**, Sun Path was an emphatic 12-length winner of a Dec. 18 allowance event at Fair Grounds. The Munnings filly attempted stakes company in the \$150,000 Silverbulletday but settled for a fourth-place finish after a wide trip throughout the race. **Joe Talamo** has the call from post No. 4.

Another filly likely to garner attention at the betting windows is **Willis Horton's** \$200,000 Martha Washington Stakes winner **Will's Secret**. Trained by **Dallas Stewart** and ridden by **Jon Court**, Will's Secret bested five rivals in the Jan. 30 Martha Washington by 5 ¼ lengths at odds of 8-1. The homebred daughter of Willis' prized stallion Will Take Charge, Will's Secret drew post 2 for Saturday's Honeybee.

The complete field from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Tabor Hall** (David Cohen, Kenny McPeck, 10-1); **Will's Secret** (Court, Stewart, 7-2); **Willful Woman** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Steve Asmussen, 6-1); **Sun Path** (Talamo, Cox, 5-2); **Pauline's Pearl** (Francisco Arietta, Asmussen, 8-1); **Absolute Anna** (Ramon Vazquez, Jerry Hollendorfer, 15-1); **Oliviaofthedesert** (David Cabrera, McPeck, 7-2); **Coach** (Florent Geroux, Cox, 4-1).

**STAKES WINNER THE GRASS IS BLUE TOPS COMPETATIVE BUSER** – **Louis Lazzinnaro's** \$100,000 Busanda Stakes winner **The Grass Is Blue** drew post No. 4 in a compact field of six fillies searching for Road to the Kentucky Oaks Championship Series points in Saturday's \$250,000 Buser Invitational at Aqueduct.

Carded as Race 6 with a post time of 3:29 p.m., the one-mile Buser will award the Top 4 finishers 50-20-10-5 points, respectively, for the \$1.25 million Longines Kentucky Oaks on Friday, April 30.

The Grass Is Blue has steadily improved since stretching out in distance two starts ago in the \$100,000 Anne Arudel County Stakes at Laurel, where she rallied from last to narrowly finish third as the 7-5 favorite. In the Busanda, The Grass Is Blue scored a one-length victory under jockey **Manny Franco**, who returns to the saddle for the Buser and will break from post No. 4.

**Daniel Velazquez'** two-time state-bred stakes winning filly **Laobanonaprayer** is another filly in the Buser who could garner attention from post 2 under **Kendrick Carmouche**. The New York-bred filly by Laoban has yet to finish off the board from five starts. Arguably her most notable accomplishment was an eight-length romp in the \$250,000 New York Stallion Series at Aqueduct on Dec. 6.

The Buser field from the rail out (with jockey and trainer): **Miss Brazil** (Eric Cancel, Anthony Dutrow); **Laobanonaprayer** (Carmouche, Velazquez); **Search Results** (Javier Castellano, Chad Brown); **The Grass Is Blue** (Franco, Brown); **Mo Desserts** (Pablo Morales, Jimmy Jerkens); **Make Mischief** (Dylan Davis, Crhis Englehart).

**ROAD TO KENTUCKY OAKS CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES CONTINUES SUNDAY WITH SANTA YSABEL** – Action on the Road to the Kentucky Oaks will continue Sunday with the \$100,000 Santa Ysabel at Santa Anita.

Entries for Sunday's program will be taken Thursday. The 1 1/16-mile race has produced several star fillies in the previous runnings including **Midnight Bisou** (2018), **Unique Bella** (2017) and **Songbird** (2016).

## ROAD TO THE LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS TOP 20

#	Horse	Trainer	Points
1.	Clairiere	Steve Asmussen	54
2.	Whole Bodemeister	Juan Carlos Avila	52
3.	Travel Column	Brad Cox	32
4.	Crazy Beautiful	Kenny McPeck	28
5.	Vequist	Butch Reid Jr.	24
6.	Dayoutoftheoffice	Tim Hamm	18
7.	Kalypso	Bob Baffert	18
8.	Girl Daddy	Dale Romans	14
9.	Simply Ravishing	Kenny McPeck	13
10.	Moon Swag	Brendan Walsh	12
11.	Malathaat	Todd Pletcher	10
12.	<b>Will's Secret</b>	<b>Dallas Stewart</b>	<b>10</b>
13.	<b>The Grass Is Blue</b>	<b>Chad Brown</b>	<b>10</b>
14.	Zaajel	Todd Pletcher	10
15.	<b>Curlin's Catch</b>	<b>Mark Casse</b>	<b>10</b>
16.	<b>Coach</b>	<b>Brad Cox</b>	<b>6</b>
17.	Littlestitious	Tom Amoss	5
18.	<b>Souper Sensational</b>	<b>Mark Casse</b>	<b>4</b>
19.	Javanica	Eoin Harty	4
20.	Lady Traveler	Dale Romans	4

Bold: running this weekend

## FUTURE WAGER

Betting in the fourth of five 2021 Kentucky Derby Future Wager pools is scheduled to open at noon (all times Eastern) on Friday and will close on Sunday at 6 p.m. The lone Kentucky Oaks Future Wager of 2021 also opens at noon Friday and is set to close Sunday at 6:30 p.m. Also available from March 6-8 is the Oaks/Derby Future Double. The \$2 minimum bet requires fans to correctly select the winners of both the April 30 Longines Kentucky Oaks (GI) and May 1 Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve (GI).

### KDFW FIELD

#	Horse	ML
1	Caddo River	15-1
2	Candy Man Rocket	30-1
3	Collaborate	30-1
4	Concert Tour	20-1
5	Dream Shake	30-1
6	Essential Quality	7-2
7	Freedom Fighter	30-1
8	Greatest Honour	6-1
9	Highly Motivated	20-1
10	Hot Rod Charlie	30-1
11	Hush of a Storm	50-1
12	Keepmeinmind	30-1
13	Life Is Good	4-1
14	Mandaloun	15-1
15	Medina Spirit	30-1
16	Midnight Bourbon	30-1
17	Prevalence	20-1
18	Proxy	20-1
19	Risk Taking	30-1
20	Roman Centurian	50-1
21	Rombauer	50-1
22	Spielberg	20-1
23	The Great One	50-1
24	Mutuel Field	10-1

### KOFW FIELD

#	Horse	ML
1	Bow Bow Girl	50-1
2	Clairiere	5-1
3	Coach	30-1
4	Crazy Beautiful	20-1
5	Dayoutoftheoffice	12-1
6	Kalypso	15-1
7	Lady Mystify	50-1
8	Li'l Tootsie	30-1
9	Malathaat	6-1
10	Moraz	50-1
11	Obligatory	30-1
12	Pass the Champagne	50-1
13	Pauline's Pearl	30-1
14	Search Results	30-1
15	Simply Ravishing	12-1
16	Souper Sensational	50-1
17	Sun Path	30-1
18	Travel Column	6-1
19	Vequist	15-1
20	Wholebodemeister	12-1
21	Will's Secret	15-1
22	Willful Woman	50-1
23	Zaajel	15-1
24	Mutuel Field	8-1

## TAKING SHAPE

The possible fields for Kentucky Derby Championship Series races are fluid as owners and trainers vie for points on the "Road to the Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve." Below are known horses mentioned to be under consideration for each race based on published news reports and other sources.

### REBEL (GII)

Saturday, March 13, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Oaklawn Park, Hot Springs, Ark., Top 4 Points: 50-20-10-5.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>			
Keepmeinmind (18)	Robertino Diodoro	135.8	S 1
Caddo River (10)	Brad Cox	141.9	E 8
Concert Tour (0)	Bob Baffert	137.8	E/P 6
<b>Known Possible Starters:</b>			
Get Her Number (10)	Peter Miller	129.2	E/P 8

### TWINSPIRES.COM LOUISIANA DERBY (GII)

Saturday, March 20, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Fair Grounds, New Orleans, La., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>			
Mandaloun (52)	Brad Cox	143.1	P 1
Midnight Bourbon (26)	Steve Asmussen	137.7	E 1
Proxy (24)	Mike Stidham	136.6	E/P 6
Hot Rod Charlie (10)	Doug O'Neill	136.4	P 1
Run Classic (0)	Bret Calhoun	126.5	E/P 6
<b>Known Possible Starters:</b>			
O Besos (5)	Greg Foley	129.7	P 3

### UAE DERBY (GII)

Saturday, March 27, \$2.5 million, 3yo, 1 3/16 M, Meydan Racecourse, Dubai, Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>	
Cowan	Steve Asmussen
Mouheeb	Nicolas Bachalard
Pink Kamehameha	Hideyuki Mori
Highland Avenue	Charlie Appleby

### FLORIDA DERBY (GI)

Saturday, March 27, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Gulfstream Park, Hallandale Beach, Fla., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>			
Greatest Honour (60)	Shug McGaughey III	144.5	S 0
Known Agenda (2)	Todd Pletcher	134.7	P 1
Collaborate (0)	Saffie Joseph Jr.	131.5	E/P 4
Soup and Sandwich (0)	Mark Casse	126.3	E/P 6

### JEFF RUBY STEAKS (GIII)

Saturday, March 27, \$200,000, 3yo, 1 1/8 M (Tapeta), Turfway Park, Florence, Ky., Top 4 Points: 20-8-4-2.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Likely Starters:</b>			
Hush of a Storm (10)	Bill Morey	130.5	P 1
Like the King (4)	Wesley Ward	130.8	E/P 1
Gretzky the Great (2)	Mark Casse	139.1	E/P 7
Hard Ry Guy (1)	Ian Wilkes	122.4	S 2
<b>Known Possible Starters:</b>			
O Besos (5)	Greg Foley	129.7	P 3

### WOOD MEMORIAL (GII)

Saturday, April 3, \$750,000, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Aqueduct, Ozone, N.Y., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Possible Starters:</b>			
Spielberg (17)	Bob Baffert	134.7	P 2
Rombauer (14)	Michael McCarthy	136.4	S 0
Risk Taking (10)	Chad Brown	133.6	P 3
Brooklyn Strong (10)	Daniel Velazquez	136.1	E/P 5

### BLUE GRASS (GII)

Saturday, April 3, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Keeneland, Lexington, Ky., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Possible Starters:</b>			
Essential Quality (40)	Brad Cox	146.3	E/P 4

### SANTA ANITA DERBY (GI)

Saturday, April 3, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Santa Anita, Arcadia, Calif., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
<b>Known Possible Starters:</b>			
Spielberg (17)	Bob Baffert	134.7	P 2
Rombauer (14)	Michael McCarthy	136.4	S 0

### ARKANSAS DERBY (GI)

Saturday, April 10, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Oaklawn Park, Hot Springs, Ark., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
Brooklyn Strong (10)	Daniel Velazquez	136.1	E/P 5

### LEXINGTON (GIII)

Saturday, April 10, \$200,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Keeneland, Lexington, Ky., Top 4 Points: 20-8-4-2.

-END-